TOMB & TEMPLE OF

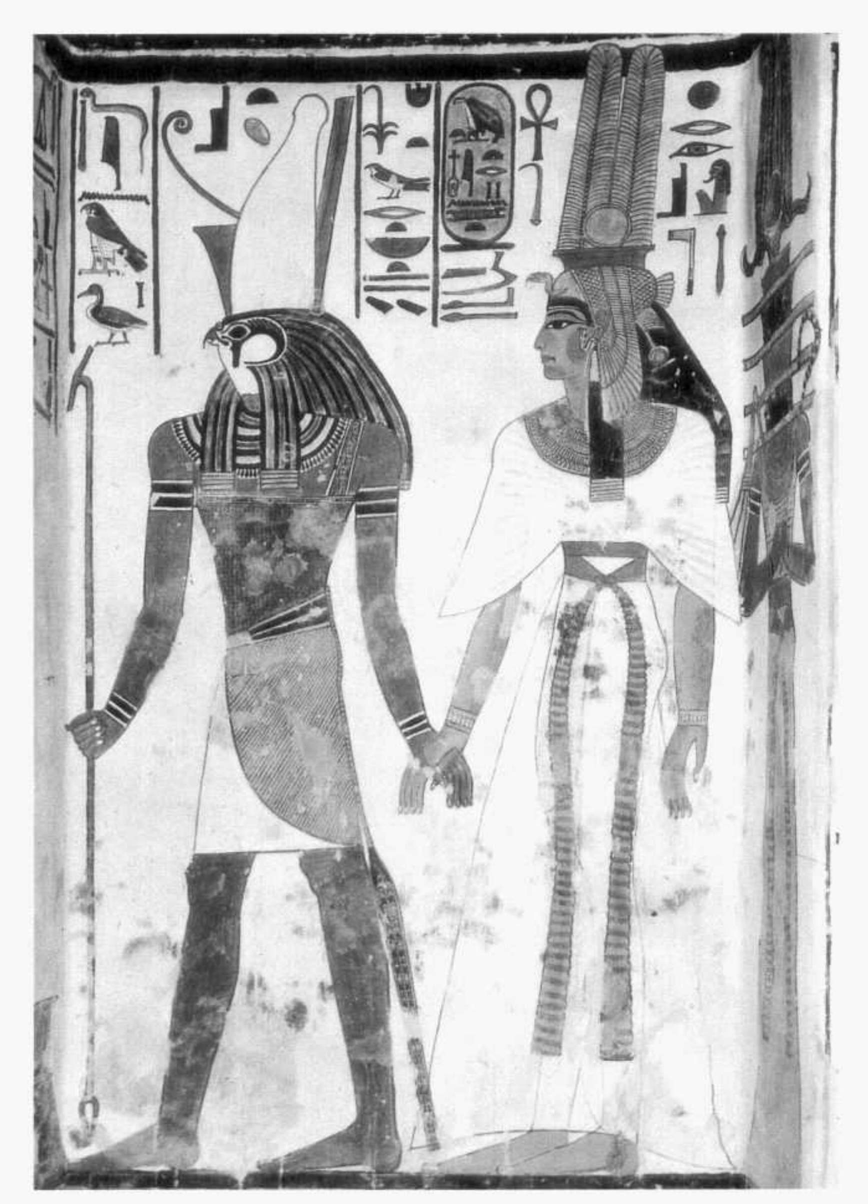
NEFERTARI

by

AMR HUSSEIN

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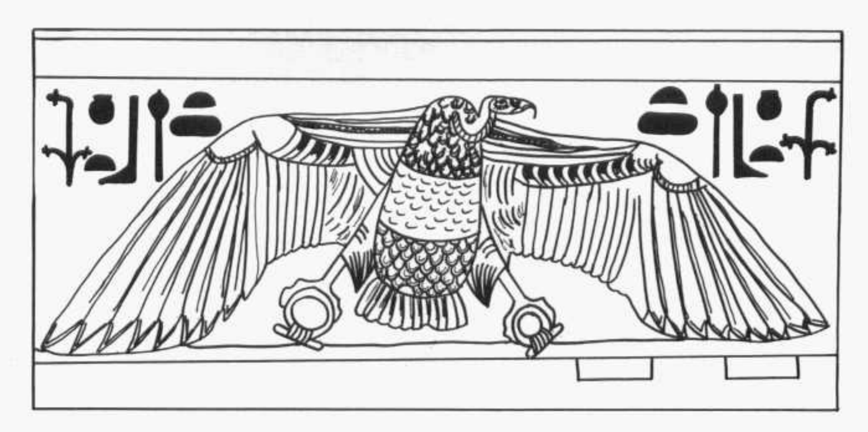




* God Horus infront of queen Nefertari leading her to the different gods.

TOMB & TEMPLE OF

NEFERTARI



* Nekhbet - the symbol of Upper Egypt - in the shape of a female eagle, the tomb of Nefertari.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the great land of Egypt has mingled with more civilizations than any other nation. As a result the Egyptian civilization is one of the oldest, the richest and the finest, dating back as far as the three stages of the Eolithic period, namely the Inferior Paleolithic, the Moderate Paleolithic and the Superior Paleolithic periods. Later, as the geological formation settled, Egypt moved into the Neolithic period during which several dispersed civilizations had existed and later had advanced. Then, when the Egyptian history entered into the Pre-Dynastic period a noticeable advancement in the mode of every day life had occurred that had continued throughout the different periods during which man had started his early documentation of history.

The year 3200 B.C. had marked the beginning of the ancient Egyptian history, during which upper and lower Egypt had become united. Later, the Old Kingdom had been replaced by the Intermediate Kingdom then the New Kingdom and the later period which had comprised thirty Dynasties and which had ended in the year 332 B.C. when Alexander The Great had conquered Egypt, thus starting a new period, namely the Ptolemic period. During the period of the New Kingdom which had lasted approximately three thousand years the women had ceased being mere followers and had started assuming a major and equal role in history. The women of that period had surpassed their basic rôle as wives and mothers and had assumed

several major religious as well as worldly positions; and in several cases had ruled the land as capable queens. Several queens had ruled Egypt, of those the first had been queen Nebet Everet (2282 - 2280 B.C.) towards the end of the sixth Dynasty, then there had been queen Subek Nefru (1782 - 1778 B.C.) who had reigned during the latter part of the twelfth Dynasty. The great queen Hatshepsut had followed (1503 - 1482 B.C.) as a fine ruler of the throne of Egypt for twenty one years, during the eigheenth Dynasty. The fourth queen to reign had been Taw-Sert (1202 - 1195 B.C.) towards the end of the nineteenth Dynasty. Besides those queens several women had achieved fame as princesses and as the wives of kings. They had assumed major roles and had changed several courses in history, of those queens Neet Hotep and Meret Nebet of the first Dynasty are a fine example, also queen Khent Kawos of the fourth Dynasty. During the New Kingdom (1570 - 1080 B.C.) there are several instances of wives who had overshadowed their husbands and kings, of those are queen Aeh Hotep wife of king Seknen Rá, queen Ahmos Nefertari wife of king Ahmos of the eighteenth Dynasty, queen Tiy wife of king Amen-Hotep the third and mother of king Akhenaton, queen Neffertiti wife of Akhenaton and queen Nefertari the wife of king Ramses II .

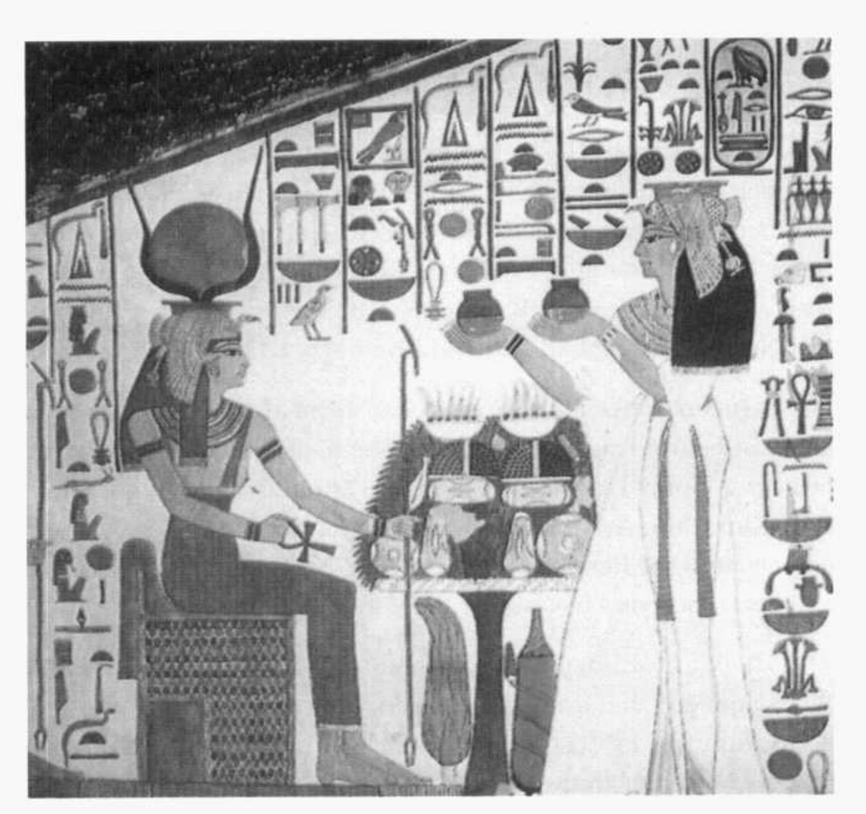
The ancient Egyptian civilization, like all progressive civilizations, had given the woman a free hand to choose and carry out her mission in life whether it had been as wife and mother, high priestess, nurser, singer, mourner, tutoress, female scribe, carrier of sacrifice, main harem of the god, as famous princesses and wives of kings or as high up as queens and sole rulers.

QUEEN NEFERTARI
MERY - EN - MUT

Hour Moheb, who had ruled Egypt for thirty years as the last king of the eighteenth Dynasty had had no heir to the throne. He had chosen the head of his armies Râ - Mes - Su (known to us as Ramses) to succeed him. When king Ramses I had assumed the throne he had become a very old man who had ruled for two years and who had left the throne to his son Seti for fourteen years. The latter's son Ramses II, one of the most famous ancient Egyptian kings, had ruled Egypt for sixty seven years during which he had led his country to internal and external prosperity, he had led his armies in the famous battle of Qadesh against the Hitites and had carried out his famous constructions all over Egypt.

To queen Nefertari, 1304 B.C. had been the year when her husband Ramses II had become the sole ruler of Egypt, after having shared his father Seti I his rule for many years. The inscriptions found in the temple of "Beit El Wali" mention the existence of the two sons of Ramses II Amoun Her Wen Mef and Khee Mouwaset which proves that Ramses II had married queen Nefertari during the twenty five years when he and his father SetiI had jointly ruled Egypt.

The marriage of Ramses II and queen Nefertari, who had been a member of the royal family, had not been a political one; as the couple had been too young to care for anything but one another. The proof of Ramses II 's great love for Nefertari is



* Queen Nefertari offering sacrifice to godess Hathor.

shown in the construction of a temple in her name beside the famous temple of Abu Simbel.

King Ramses II had had numerous wives and a large number of male and female children, but his three official wives had been queen Nefertari, queen Eset Nofret and queen Maat Nefru Râ (the daughter of king Kheita). King Ramses II had, also, married three of his daughters Bent Aenta, Meret Amoun and Nebet Tawi, he had also had several concubines.

Queen Nefertari, however, had been the king's first wife, his most beloved and most famous. She had given birth to several princes Amoun Her Wen Mef, Khee Mouwaset, Seti and Enbo Erer Khoo, the first two had died in infancy and as fate would have it none of her sons had succeeded their father. Ramses II had been succeded by queen Eset Nofret's son.

It is unfortunate that no records had been left to show when queen Nefertari had died, but the fact that the disappearance of inscriptions concerning her on statues of Ramses II during the very end of his reign denotes that she had died before her husband.

THE TITLES OF QUEEN NEFERTARI

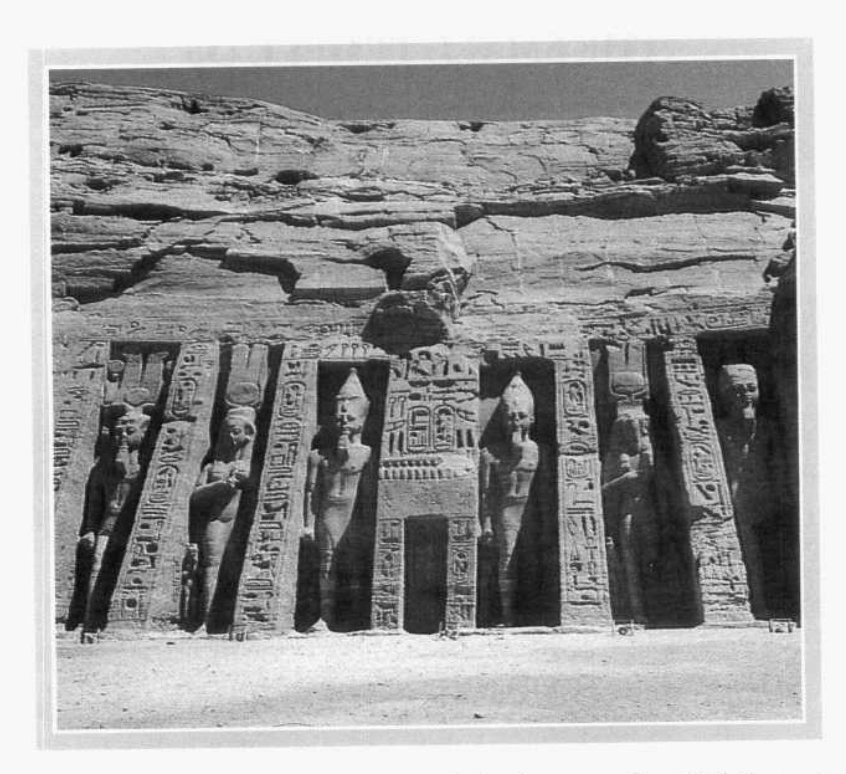
The greatly praised princess, the dainty lady and restful love, the one who inherited upper and lower Egypt, the nimble of hands in striking jingles, the beautiful in conversation and singing, the great wife and beloved of the king and the wife of the strong bull "Nefertari" "Mery - En - Mut", the one living eternally like the sun.

Those are some of queen Nefertari's titles that are inscribed on her statue which is on exhibit in the Brussels museum. Rarely has any ancient Egyptian queen acquired so many titles, some other titles are :

- Hemet Nesu (or) queen.
- Hemet Ka Nekhet (or) wife of strong bull.
- Hemet Nesu Wert (or) the great queen.
- Nebet Tawi (or) mistress of two lands.
- Henut Shemeu Tamhu (or) mistress of south and north.
- Henut Tawi (or) mistress of two lands.
- Weret Hesut (or) of great favour.
- Jedt Khet Nebet Ir Tu En Es (or) all she says is obeyed.
- Erit Be - Et (or) the inheriting princess.
- Nebet Yamet (or) of great attraction.
- Benert Merut (or) the pretty beloved.

- Nefret Her (or) beautiful of face.
- Enet Em Shuty (or) the beautiful one with two feathers.
- Sehteb (or) who pleases god.

Those are some of the titles of queen Nefertari whose name means "Beauty of Beauties", a queen who had acquired beauty of name and titles, and so was worthy of being the wife of one of the greatest ancient Egyptian kings.



* The small temple of Abu Simbel - the temple of Nefertari.

THE SMALL TEMPLE OF ABU SIMBEL THE TEMPLE OF NEFERTARI

The small temple of Abu Simbel "The Temple Of Nefertari" is one of the greatest monuments which king Ramses II had erected in dedication to his beloved wife.

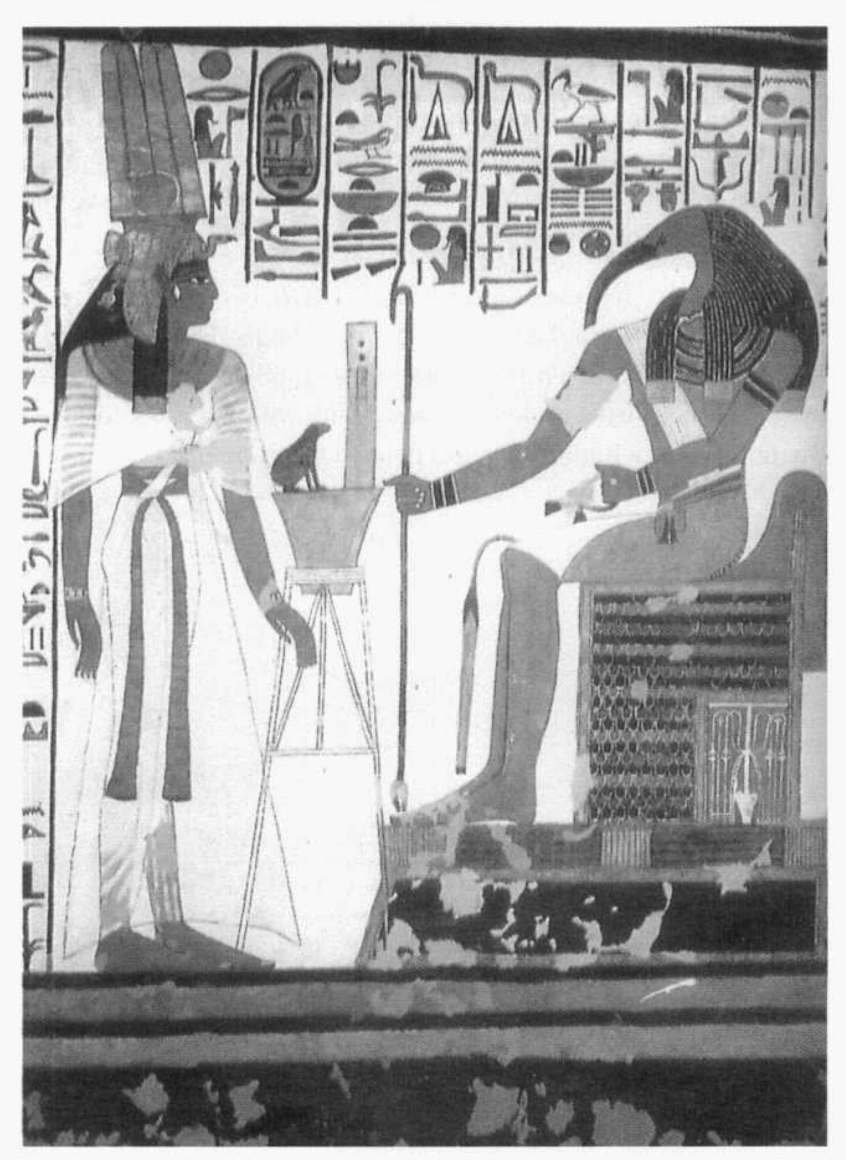
The great king had erected the two temples of Abu Simbel approximately 280 kilometers south of Aswan on the west bank of the Nile. The rock - cut temples which had been carved into "Pure" mountain for the worship of the gods "Hor Akhte", "Amoun-Rá" and "Ptah" are the most beautiful and imposing temples.

The small temple which lies north of the large one, also named the "Temple Of Hathor", consists of a huge façade comprising six statues ten meters tall, three on either side of the temple, two representing Ramses II with queen Nefertari in their midst. Beside those huge statues had been carved small statues of the princes Mery Atoum, Mery Râ and Beru Her Wen Mef.

The entrance of the temple leads to a hall carved into the mountain carried on six pillars adorned by Hathor, godess of love, on one side and Ramses II , Nefertari and godesses Khnum and Thoth on the other. The walls are decorated by typical religious paintings of Ramses II and Nefertari offering sacrifice to the gods Set, Hor, Amoun, Ptah and Hor Akhti.

Next, there is a widthwise vestibule with halls on either side, in the middle of the vestibule lies the Holy Sanctuary which is decorated by religious paintings representing Ramses II burning incence to the god Ramses and the godess Nefertari, there are also paintings representing queen Nefertari facing the godesses Mut and Hathor.

The two temples of Abu Simbel had been in danger of being flooded by the Nile water when the High Dam was built. It took four years of strenuous work 1964 - 1968 and the donations of several countries under the supervision of UNESCO to move the temples to a higher location near their original site.



* Queen Nefertari standing infront of the godess of writing and knowledge Gehouti.

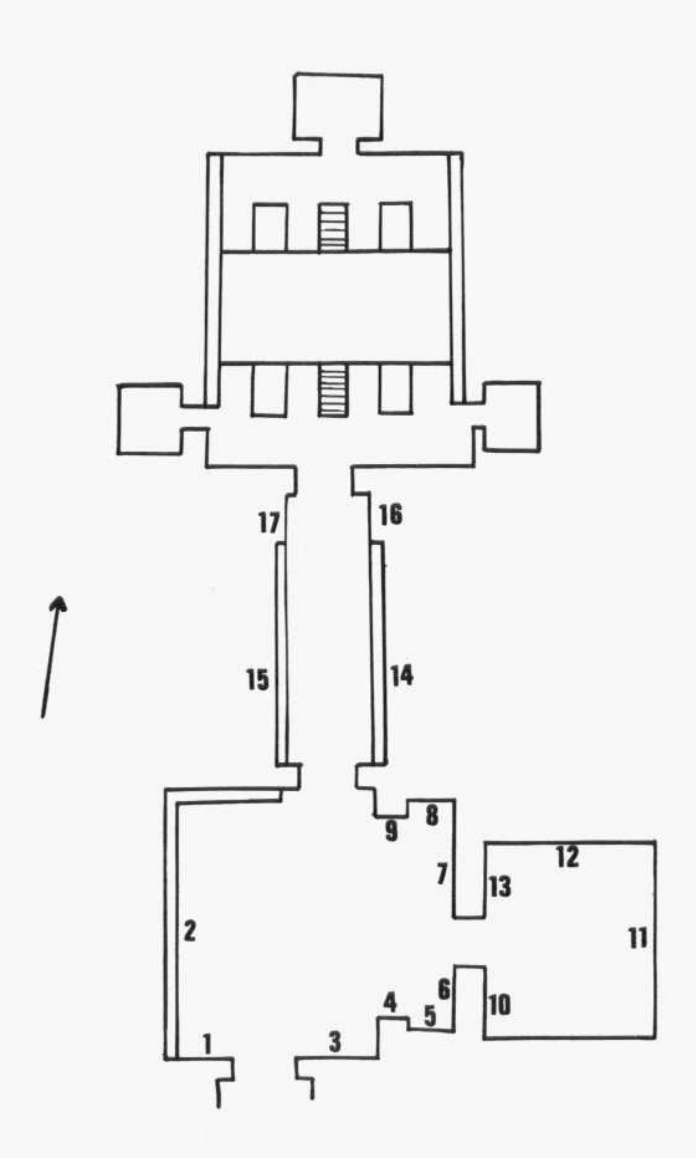


* Godess Isis holding Nefertari's hand to lead her. On the protruding wall, to the left, godess Serquet.

VALLEY OF THE QUEENS

A valley which lies south of the Thebes cemetery and which had been named "Ta - Set - Nefru" or "The Beautiful Place". Valley Of The Queens had been a burial place for the queens, princes and princesses of the nineteenth and twentieth Dynasties and goes as far back as the seventeenth Dynasty, it contains a total of seventy tombs. Several tombs in that valley lack the usual paintings and inscriptions and long passages; as the limestone nature of that area had made it impossible. Most of the tombs contain a hall and a burial chamber which contains pillars. The tombs are very modest in comparison to those of the Valley Of The Kings.

The tomb of Nefertari (number 66) is the most famous in the valley. Some of the other important tombs are those of prince "Amoun Her Khebshef" the son of Ramses III (number 55) and queen "Tiy" (number 52) and queen "Isis" wife of Ramses III (number 51) and queen Saet Ra wife of Ramses I (number 38). The valley also contains the tombs of Ramses II's three daughters "Nebet Tawi", "Merit Amoun" and "Benet Aanet".



* Tomb of queen Nefertari.

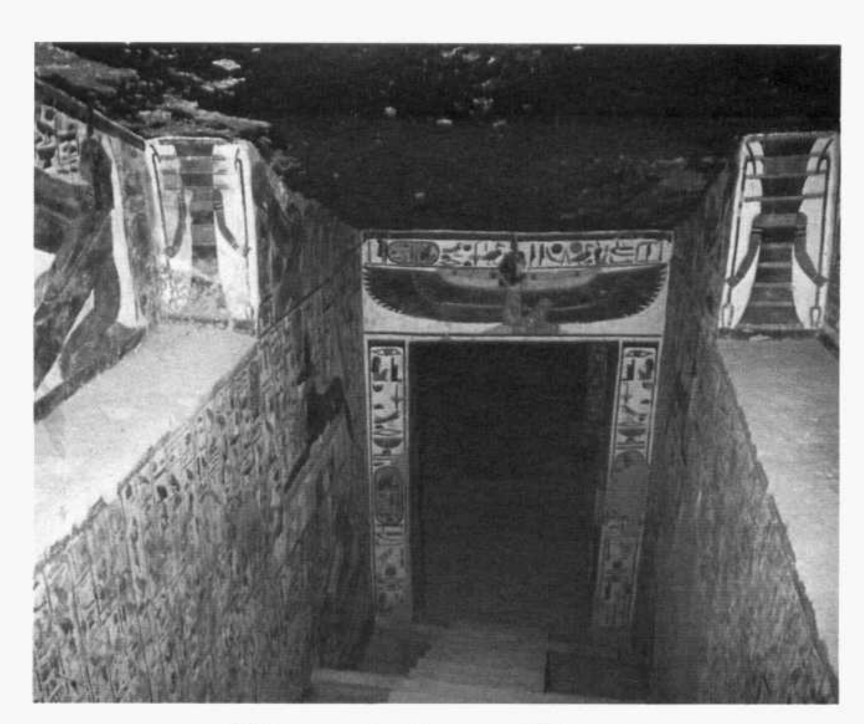
THE TOMB OF NEFERTARI

In 1904 the Italian archeologist Ernesto Schiaparelli discovered the tomb of Nefertari in the Valley Of The Queens. The tomb is a very beautiful one; as it cotains an abundance of beautiful, colourful inscriptions, rarely found in any other cemetery.

The ancient Egyptians had overcome the limestone nature of the tomb by covering the walls with two layers, one of clay and another of white plaster. This had enabled them to draw, colour and inscribe magnificent works of art, especially the protruding colourful inscriptions. It is unfortunate that many of the beautiful inscriptions had been damaged due to salty humidity, but a lot of time and effort had been spent by specialists to repair the tomb which had been re-opened to the public in 1995.

The tomb of Nefertari consists of an entrance hall with a side chamber and stairs leading down to the burial chamber which comprises three small side chambers. The tomb is a simply designed one like most of those in the Valley Of The Queens.

In the first side chamber next to the burial chamber there is the southern wall to the left (no1), on that wall is a famous scene which shows queen Nefertari seated on her throne playing a game, infront of her is the bird "Ba" (symbolising the spirit) with a man's face. On the western wall (no 2) there is the Akht (the horizon) between two lions and the sacred bird Benou of the city of Oun "Ain Shams" infront of it is the mummy of the queen lying on a bed with godesses Isis in the shape of a falcon



* The tomb of queen Nefertari.

on the right and Nephthys in the shape of a falcon on the left. The rest of that wall is covered with inscriptions from the Book Of The Gates depicting the passage of the sun during the twelve hours of the night through twelve gates each guarded by a huge snake, the deceased must know the names of the hours and the gates to pass through.

On the southern wall to the right (no 3) there is a scene representing queen Nefertari worshiping god Osiris. On the protruding wall (no 4) the three protruding sides contain three scenes of god Anubis, godess Neit and the Hierogliphic sign Jed which signifies firmness and strengh. As for wall (no 5) there is a scene of god Horus leading the queen to god Hor Akhte and godess Hathor on wall (no 6). On the eastern wall (no 7) a beautiful scene of god Khepri who had symbolized the morning sun and who had been usually represented as a scarab or as a human body with the head of a scarab.

On the north wall (no 8) there is a famous scene of queen Nefertari with godess Isis, it is one of the most beautiful paintings in the tomb. Then there is a protruding wall (no 9) with three sides which contain the inscription of the Jed post and a scene of godess Serquet, she is one of the godesses protecting the coffin of the dead, and inscriptions of god Oziris of the underworld. That chamber comprises a beautifully decorated cornice to the left and front of the entrance which could have been designed as a shelf for statues of the deceased queen or offerings to the gods.

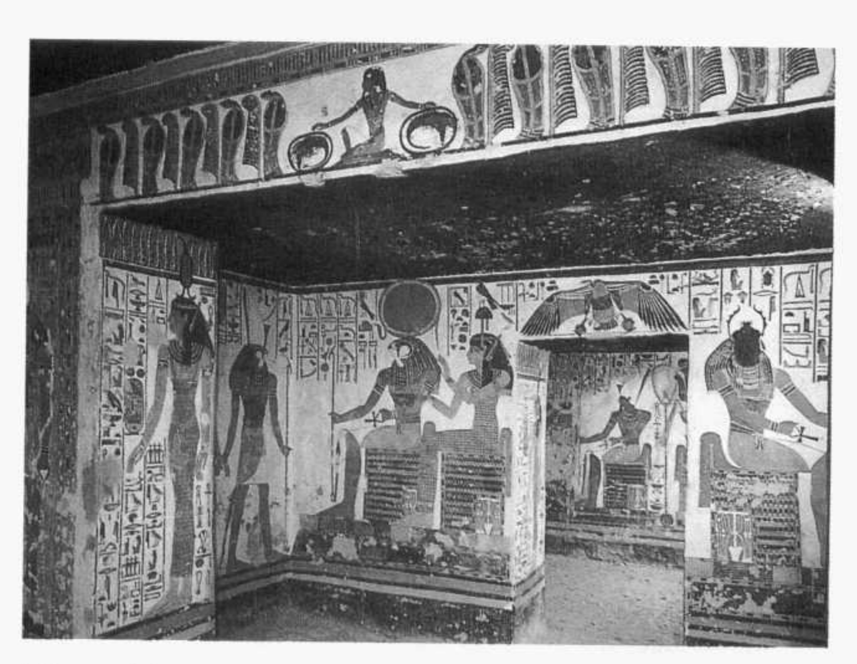
To the right of the chamber is an entrance hall which leads to a side chamber. Above the entrance is a painting representing

godess Nekhbet in the shape of a female eagle - the godess of protection-, godess Nekhbet had symbolized upper Egypt. The side chamber, like the main chamber, is full of beautiful inscriptions and paintings. To the right of the entrance on wall (no 10) there is a scene showing god Rá in the shape of a mummy with the head of a ram between the two godesses Isis and Nephthys. Then there is a painting representing queen Nefertari worshiping the bull and seven cows. On the opposite wall (no 11) are two scenes, one showing queen Nefertari offering sacrifice and incence to the god Atum - the name Atum means "the complete", "the perfect"-, the other scene to the left shows the queen offering sacrifice and incence to god Oziris.

On wall (no 12) there is a scene representing queen Nefertari offering sacrifice to god Gehouti - the god of writing and knowledge - in the shape of a writing slate and inkwell. To the left of the entrance, wall (no 13) contains a scene showing the queen offering sacrifice to god Ptah - the god of Menf city - inside his sacred chamber, with a huge sacred "Jed" post drawn behind him.

Once, again, in the main chamber, stairs are found in its northern wall which lead to the burial chamber. On the wall of the entrance of the burial chamber are paintings representing the four sons of Horus "Amest", shown with a human head, "Heabi" with a baboon head, "Dwamut - Ef" with a falcon head and "Kebeh - Senu - Ef" with a head of a jackal, those four gods had guarded the canopic jars of the deceased.

The walls on either side of the stairs comprise several scenes. On the right one (no 14) there is a scene showing the



* Part of the tomb of Nefertari - The Valley Of The Queens.



* Queen Nefertari seated in her chamber playing a game.

queen offering two vases as a sacrifice to godess "Hathor" with godess "Serquet" - one of the godesses who protect the coffin of the deceased - seated behind and godess "Maát" - godess of justice - shown behind the two other godesses with a beautiful human face.

The wall to the left of the stairway contains the same scene except that godess "Serquet" in the scene had been replaced by godess "Nephthys" - the guardian of one of the sides of the coffin. The walls on either side of the stairs comprise a drawing of a huge winged snake, giving protection to the name of the queen. Under that scene god Anubis - guard of the cemetery - is drawn in the shape of a jackal seated on the usual base shaped as a coffin. The godesses "Isis" and "Nephthys" are, also, painted on walls (no 16) and (no 17).

The royal burial chamber comprises four pillars in two rows, on the sides of those pillars are scenes showing queen Nefertari and the different gods and godesses. Between the pillars, the area had been hollowed out to fit in the deceased queen's coffin, with small steps on either side. Three small side chambers are connected to the burial chamber to the right, left and front sides. Most of the scenes in the burial chamber are from the Book Of The Gates.

RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY

The visitor to the ancient Egyptian monuments finds it very difficult to understand why such an enormous amount of effort and time had been spent on the design, construction and ornamentation of their tombs. It is therefore important to give a brief resumé of the belief in resurrection and immortality in the ancient Egyptian religion.

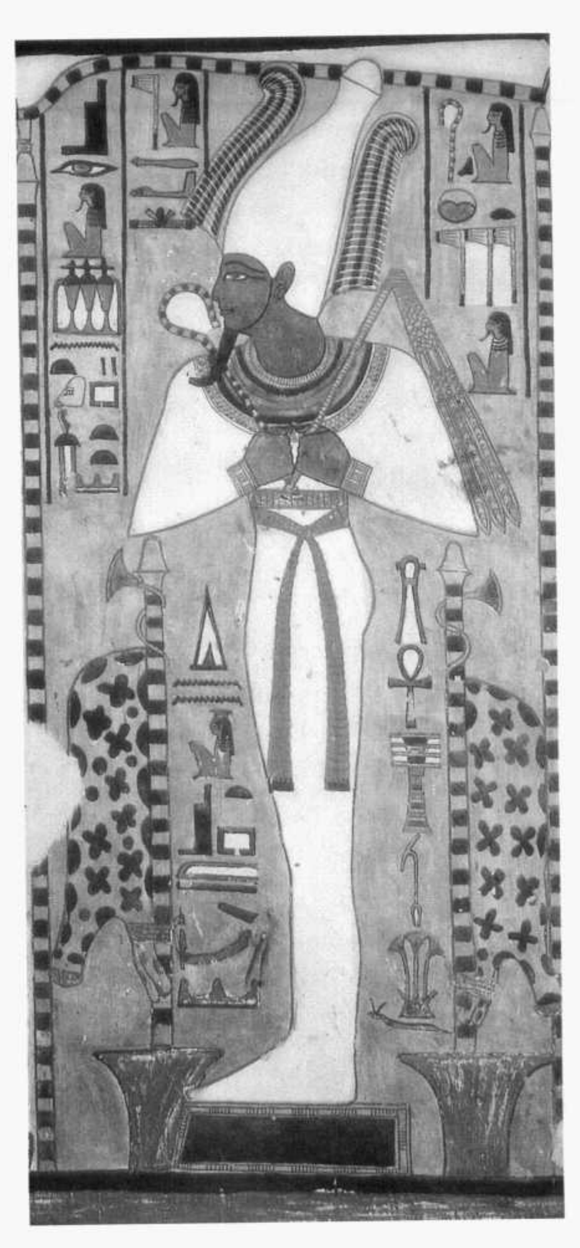
The ancient Egyptians had realised, since the earliest periods, that the dead bodies had retained their shape for a long time due to the dry climate and desert land in which they had been burried. They had felt that that had been due to religious reasons. Religion had been a most important factor in the life and culture of ancient Egypt, proof of that lies in the enormous number of temples and tombs that remain to this day.

The ancient Egyptians had believed that man had consisted of seven main elemants namely "Khet" the material body, "Ba" the spirit, "Ka" the double, "Epe" the heart, "Ren" the name, "Shot" the shadow and "Akh" the invisibility. Those seven elements, which had been linked together, had been kept so after death by means of mummification, chanting incantations and offering sacrifice.

The belief in resurrection and immortality had in later periods progressed to the extent of giving a full and clear vision



* The mummy of Nefertari inside the mummification tent, guarded by the two godesses Isis and Nephthys.



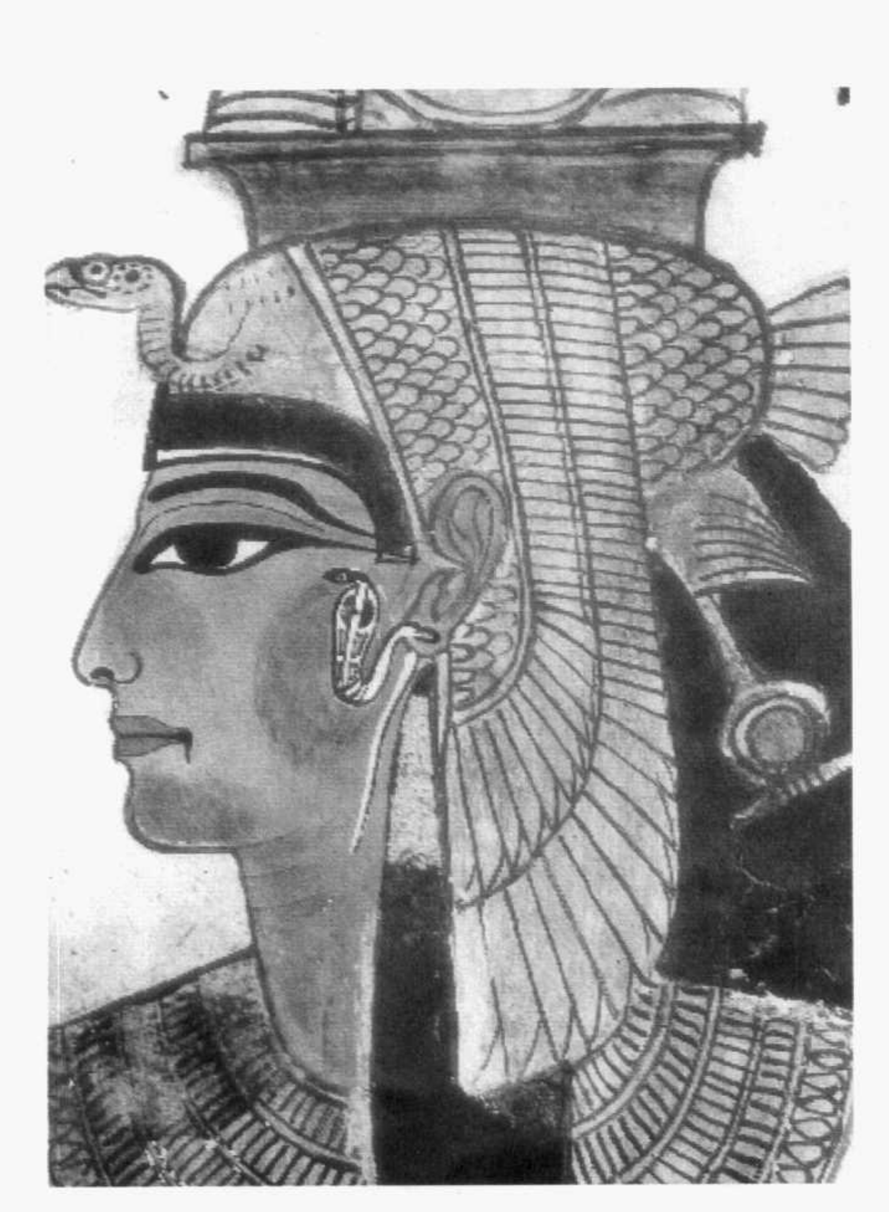
* God Oziris - inscription from the tomb of Nefertari.

of the after life. God Ozir (Oziris) had been the head of the underworld and, the god in charge of judging the deceased together with god Rá (the sun) who had been believed to start another journey, to the land of the dead, after sunset. The ancient Egyptians had believed that god Rá had had two boats to help on both journeys, "Mehenget" had been the name of the morning boat and "Meskenet" had been that of the night boat. Judgement had been depicted through the process of weighing the heart of the deceased against the feather of "Maát" - the truth - If the deceased had been a benevolent man, then the scale tips towards "Maát" and the deceased, then, deserves an afterlife of immortality with the gods.

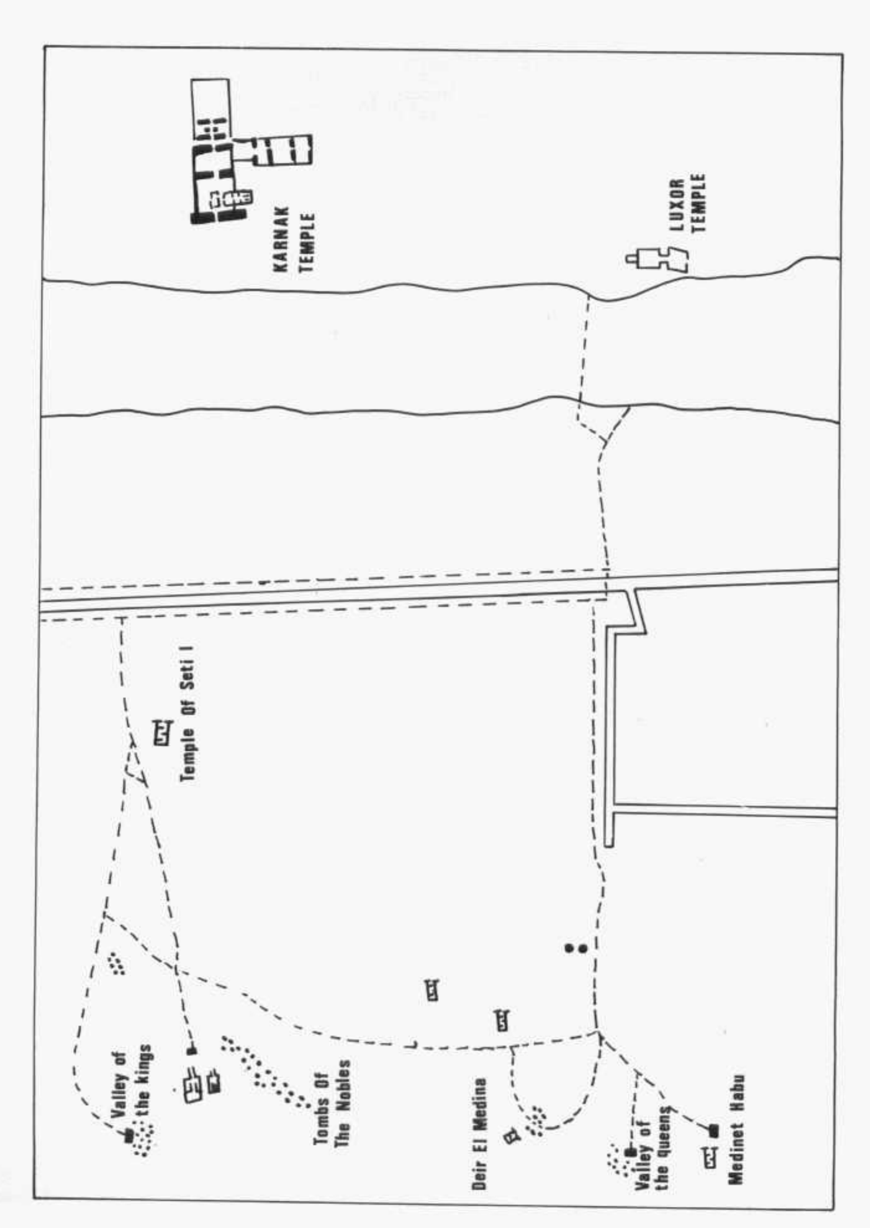
In addition the ancient Egyptians had possessed a large number of religious chants and hymns with prayers which had been believed to help the deceased in his dangerous journey until the sanctuary of the underworld had been reached where a serene after life with the gods awaited. Those chants had been named "The Texts Of The Pyramids", "The Texts Of The Coffins", "The Book Of The Dead", "The Book Of The Caves", "The Book Of The Gates", "The Book Of What Is Found In The Under World", (Emi - Do - Wat) and "The Book Of The Earth".

The kings and queens of ancient Egypt had been more fortunate than the commoners; for their tombs had been built and beautifully decorated with religious inscriptions. The extravagance and beauty of their tombs reflect to this day their great genius and wealth.

This brief resumé explains the religious background which had driven the ancient Egyptians to give such great care to the building and decorating of their tombs.



Nefertari


KARNAK TEMPLE
LUXOR TEMPLE
Temple Of Seti I
Valley of the kings
Tombs Of The Nobles
Deir El Medina
Valley of the queens
Medinet Habu

* Map Of Luxor.